4. Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging, strengthening of quality control.
5. Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for improving the acceptability of the product, especially the mangoes in overseas markets.
6. Grant of Air Freight Subsidy for exports of selected fresh vegetables and fruits.
7. Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions.
8. Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as fresh fruits and vegetables.
9. Abolition of cess on export of pepper (except green pepper in brine), cardamom, saffron and spice oils and oleoresins to make them price competitive in the overseas markets, setting up of laboratories for testing of products to ensure quality, technology transfer; process upgradation and product development.
10. Providing assistance in development of data-base and dissemination of market information.

(c) Value of Export of Agricultural products excluding plantation products, is likely to attain a level of US $ 4 billion in 1998-99.

Crop Diseases

3989. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of spreading of diseases on crops in the country during the last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what remedial measures have been taken by Government, togetherwith the long-term measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) Reports were received of spread of various diseases in some crops in certain state during the last year. The details of the diseases and the crops and States affected are given in the attached statement (*see* below).

(c) The remedial measures taken by Central and State Governments include:—

(1) Distribution of seeds of disease resistant varieties to the farmers and recommending their use. Some of the disease resistant varieties are given below:—

(i) Cotton: CNH 1012, CNH 123, RS 2013, RS992, LRK 516, LRA 5166, LH1556, LH144, RG 8 — against curl virus.

(ii) Paddy: Musuri, Prasad, Saket, 1R64, Daya, Rasi, Kunti, Pantdhan 10, Vikramarya, Radha- against bacterial leaf blight, blast and tungro

(iii) Soyabean: PK 1029, 1024, Ankur, JS80 1 against rust

(iv) Potato: Kufri Badshah— against late blight.

(2) Regular sample roving surveys are organised to monitor incidence of diseases and for undertaking control operations.

(3) Integrated disease management strategy is popularised which consist of

— control of seedborne diseases,

— avoiding excessive use of nitrogeneous fertilizer

— rational use of water and fertilizers to avoid disease build up,

— adoption of cultural, varietal and mechanical measures for disase control,

— need based use of safer fungicides,

— encouraging use of microbial pesticides particularly to control seed and soilborne pathogens,

— training and education of extension functionaries and farmers through on-form demonstrations.

In addition to the above, research efforts are being intensified by the India Council of Agricultural Research to develop more disease resistant varieties of seeds for various crops.

Statement

S.No.	Crop	Disease	State
1.	Cotton	Leaf Curl virus disease	Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan
2.	Sugarcane	Red rot	Tamil Nadu, U.P.
3.	Paddy		
	(a) Bacterial leaf blight		Karnataka, Orissa,Haryana
	(b) Blast		Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Orissa
	(c) Sheath Blight		Karnataka, West Bengal
	(d) Rice Tungro Virus		West Bengal
4.	Mustard		
	(a) White rust		Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh
	(b) Alternalia blight		Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh
5.	Soybean	Rust	Madhya Pradesh
6.	Groundnut	Tikka	Tamil Nadu, Gujarat
7.	Potato	Late Blight	Uttar Pradesh

Cultivation of Pepper in Kerala

3990. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kerala Government has asked for financial assistance to implement a scheme for developing cultivation of Pepper; and

(b) if so, what is the amount asked for and sanctioned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) Government of Kerala submitted a Report on Technology Mission on Black Pepper to the Planning Commission for improving production, productivity and quality of balck pepper in the State, as a state activity, at a total cost of Rs. 221.62 crores for 7 years. The proposed technology mission envisages to pool available resources and efforts; and integrate the activities of all the State and Central institutions/agencies located in the State and involved in development of black pepper. As the Technology Mission on Black Pepper involve inter-governmental and inter-ministerial coordination, the Planning Commission has sought the views to the concerned departments. Final decision has not been taken with regard to financial implications of various participating agencies/departments.

Ministry of Agriculture has, however, been supporting the production programme for balck pepper and other spices under the Centrally Sponsored Integrated Programme for Development of Spices (IPDS). Under this programme, Government of India have released Rs. 1349.92 lakhs to Government of Kerala during 1997-98. Of this, Rs. 924.00 lakhs were earmarked for development of black pepper, which include most of the production components of the proposed Technology Mission. These programmes are being continued during 1998-99.

Production of Vegetabls in Kerala

3991. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a scheme from Kerala Government costing Rs. 2863 lakhs for producing vegetables on a large scale; and

(b) if so, the details of the scheme and Government's decision thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.